

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1212

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to the authority of the department of agriculture to accept and expend gifts.

Brief Description: Authorizing the department of agriculture to accept and expend gifts.

Sponsors: Representatives Lytton, Smith, Blake and Warnick; by request of Department of Agriculture.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 1/18/11, 1/25/11 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the Washington State Department of Agriculture to accept, expend, and retain gifts, grants, bequests, or other contributions.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Stanford, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Wilcox, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Dunshee, Hinkle, Kretz, Lytton, Orcutt, Pettigrew and Rolfes.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) oversees, manages, regulates, and supports programs that relate to food safety and the agriculture industry. The scope of the WSDA includes animal services, commodity inspections, consumer services, pesticide management, plant services, food assistance programs, and the marketing of Washington agricultural products.

The WSDA is authorized to collect fees and assessments. The agency is not specifically authorized to accept gifts, bequests, or other voluntary contributions.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

The WSDA is authorized to accept, expend, and retain gifts, grants, bequests, or other contributions. Accepted contributions may be from public or private sources and must be used to carry out the purposes and programs of the WSDA.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The bill grants the WSDA the authority to collect resources for the benefit of the state's communities. It is a gift horse that the Legislature may want to look in the mouth.

The bill arose because an estate attorney contacted the WSDA on behalf of a client who wanted to leave money in his estate plan for the WSDA's Farm-to-School program. The WSDA determined that it did not have the authority to accept bequests. The bill would allow for these types of bequests and also allow the WSDA to receive large donations that would assist the agency's food safety program assist food banks.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Lytton, prime sponsor; Tom Davis, Washington State Department of Agriculture; and Mike Moran, Second Harvest.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.